


The Powerful Intersection of Margins & Mainstream:

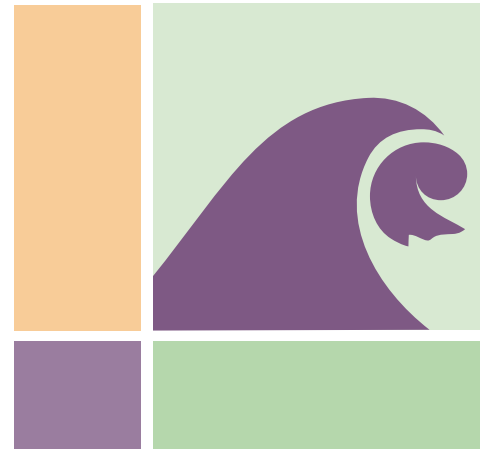
Mapping the Social Change Work of Women's Funds

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For: The Women's Funding Network





Acknowledgements

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Special thanks are due to the 24 women's funds that provided the information for the data base and the 11 executive directors who agreed to be interviewed. These funds' web-based, publicly available data about grantees were particularly impressive and helpful for this type of research. A full list of these funds can be found on page 6 of this Report.

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Introduction & Background

The Purpose of this Mapping Project:

This mapping project documents a representative cross-section of U.S.-based women's funds and their grantees, and provides a better understanding of the efforts and significance of women's funds, organizations and programs, in organizing and mobilizing people and resources in support of progressive social change.



Context:

The place of women's organizations and women's funds in catalyzing change

Women's organizations are part of the local, regional and national fabric of progressive social change in the United States. **Much of the U.S. social and economic agenda in the last 40 years has been driven by changes catalyzed through activist and women's organizations.** Progress in diverse issues - family violence, preventive health care, early childhood education, trafficking and bondage of women and children, workforce composition, wage equity, workplace equality, environmental justice, school reform and sports transformation, and more -- are traceable through the agenda for equality set by activist women and organizations since the early 1970's. It is not surprising, then, that women's own organizations, as well as women's programs within mainstream community organizations, continue to generate hope and to bear considerable responsibility for progressive social change.

By looking at the grantees of women's foundations a snapshot or landscape forms, capturing the kind of work and social change being accomplished by women and girls today.

The intersection of margins and mainstream

Women's funds have formed around strong visions and values about achieving equality and the full participation of women and girls in the economy and society. With these values, women's funds constantly confront the realities of poverty and marginalization experienced by women, especially when blended with race, ethnicity, age, and other circumstances like immigration or refugee status. As a result, funding is often concentrated in the hands of women living these realities in the margins of our economy and society. At the same time, women's funds are magnets for resources—human and financial. Most have endowments, and most have donors and decision-makers who span the class and power structures of their communities or domains. Women's funds intentionally position themselves at the intersection of society's margins and mainstream and find significant power at these crossroads.

Who are the “women's funds”—by definition?

Women's foundations commonly call themselves “funds” and use the terminology of “Fund” and “Foundation” interchangeably. In this report the words “fund” or “funds” are used to signify both names. This mapping research is focused on 24 of the 94 U.S.-based women's funds within WFN's global membership of 116. For the purpose of this mapping project, women's funds are those that:

- Dedicate 51% or more of their resources, (direct programs and grant making), to improving the lives of women and girls.

- Are governed and led by 51% or more women.
- Are U.S.-based members of the Women's Funding Network.

Women's funds vary in structure like the larger world of foundations. Many are public foundations (similar to community foundations); some are private family foundations; and, some have institutional members using federated giving as a model. Most are grantmaking foundations also running operating programs.

Who are the grantees of women's funds?

Grantees of women's funds include large and small non-profit organizations that are local, national or international in scope. These organizations are led primarily by women. Community by community, women's funds make grants mostly in their own backyard. However, many intentionally fund state, regional, and national efforts as a way of vertically integrating their local projects and interests into the broader power structure. Some funds have national and international scope (e.g., Ms. Foundation for Women Inc., Third Wave Foundation, and Global Fund for Women); some have issue-specific identities and grantees (e.g., Lesbian Foundation for Justice, Fund for Women Artists).

Many funds have grantmaking values that focus their leaders on ideas, projects, and organizations that address problems in the community not yet acknowledged by others. Often the grantees are young and small organizations with new and emerging leadership. Mainstream organizational grantees, (e.g., YWCA, ACLU, Planned Parenthood, Good Will, Older Women's League, etc.), are often supported by women's funds, but usually for organizational projects that are not yet recognized or fundable from mainstream donors.

The average one-year grant for this sample was \$13,586. The mapping database includes financial data for 1144 grants, (from a field of 1263 reported grants), for a combined total of \$14.65 million. The largest grant in the data base was \$136,000; the smallest was \$600 with a median grant size of \$10,000. The Women's Funding Network, with its 116 foundation members, estimates 2006 grant making to be in excess of \$50 million, the 2004 total.

What else defines women's funds?

In addition to being gender-focused in their work and governance, women's funds are founded and operate within the spirit of four defining values:

- Diversity
- Inclusiveness
- Empowerment of women and girls
- Commitment to social change

These values drive women's funds to articulate visions, missions, and strategies that strive for equality. The emphasis on empowerment means that women's funds value engagement in the form of civic and political participation, as well as many other ways in which women and girls find and use "voice" for change.

Values-Based Vision:

Like most foundations, women's funds use their resources to meet pressing needs and build on opportunities within their communities and fields of interest. But unlike many other foundations, women's funds organize their work around a lively vision of social change to achieve full social, economic, political, and personal empowerment through the participation of women and girls.

Values-Based Financial Resources:

Similar to other public foundations, women's funds actively fundraise for legacy endowment contributions and major gifts. But women's funds also build their philanthropic base across age and class, creating a powerful network of donors from the margins to the mainstream.

Values-Based Focus:

Women's funds are ultimately for the benefit of all women, but the work is to support and strengthen women and girls with the greatest needs and fewest resources to solve problems and take action where they are. This means that over 77% of women's funds grants are exclusively or predominantly for poor and marginalized women who are finding their own voices within the community, and learning to move beyond immediate needs to more long-lasting solutions. Fifteen percent (15%) of grants in the database serve women and girls of all economic classes. Approximately eight percent (8%) of grants did not have identifiable information about the income level of participants. Only four grants reported targeting middle or upper income participants exclusively.

Values-Based Collaboration:

Women's funds have organized themselves into their own active network (Women's Funding Network) and carry the networking and collaborative models into their grantmaking and community leadership work. Women's funds collaborate with other funders and action coalitions on their focused issue-priorities (e.g., environment, community development, economic development, etc.). Some use grantmaking criteria that value and sometimes require collaboration in the

work of their grantees. Funding through coalitions and collaboratives is one of the most popularly used strategic approaches practiced by women's funds.

Theory of Change

Women's funds, in defining themselves by values, focus their work on the worldwide conundrum: that is, regardless of the growing wealth of a nation and the amazing advancement of many women, poverty persists as a women's issue.

While women's funds stand for increasing the quality of rights and responsibilities of all women, they are also functioning with a theory of change that attempts to improve the lives of all women by dealing with women's marginality. It is a "bottom-up" belief that the whole community cannot be improved or changed without the full participation of women and girls, and that the full participation of women and girls cannot be achieved without bringing women and girls from the margins into the mainstream. While individual funds express this belief or theory of change in different ways, there is a common core belief at the heart of most women's funds:

In order for society and its social and economic institutions to change, (and include and serve all of us, especially women and girls), those at the margins must be supported in finding and using their ideas and voices to create and advocate for new solutions to immediate problems, and in advancing toward the mainstream of rights, responsibilities and participation.

The Growing Influence of Women's Funds and their Leadership

Women's funds are nearing a tipping point of name recognition, leadership and public trust in their work which is key to future growth and influence in policy, philanthropy, and grassroots spheres. Already in many communities, women's funds are the "go-to" institutions for questions, resources, and ideas about women's and girls' issues. Because women's funds have a serious resource base, (most have some endowment and strong annual giving programs), and strong strategic ideas and agendas for women and girls, they are distinct among philanthropic institutions and women's organizations alike. Their resource-based stability gives them a strong and increasingly important place, locally and nationally, in the institutional framework of social change.

Mapping Methods

The mapping project methodology is first defined by the U.S.-based scope of the project and the decision to look at a cross-section of women's funds, rather than attempting to do a complete "census" of all women's funds. The funds chosen are mostly public funds (21 out of 24), working in diverse cities and states, urban and rural settings, and all geographical areas of the U.S. This diverse profile of funds provides a useful sample and representation of all U.S.-based women's funds. The data from this sample of 24, therefore, is assumed to represent patterns and trends among all of the U.S. women's funds.

Three main methods were employed in collecting information:

- Analysis of grants made over the past three (3) years by the 24 funds.
- Profiles of 1,263 grants/grantees.
- Leadership interviews with funds (11 of the 24).

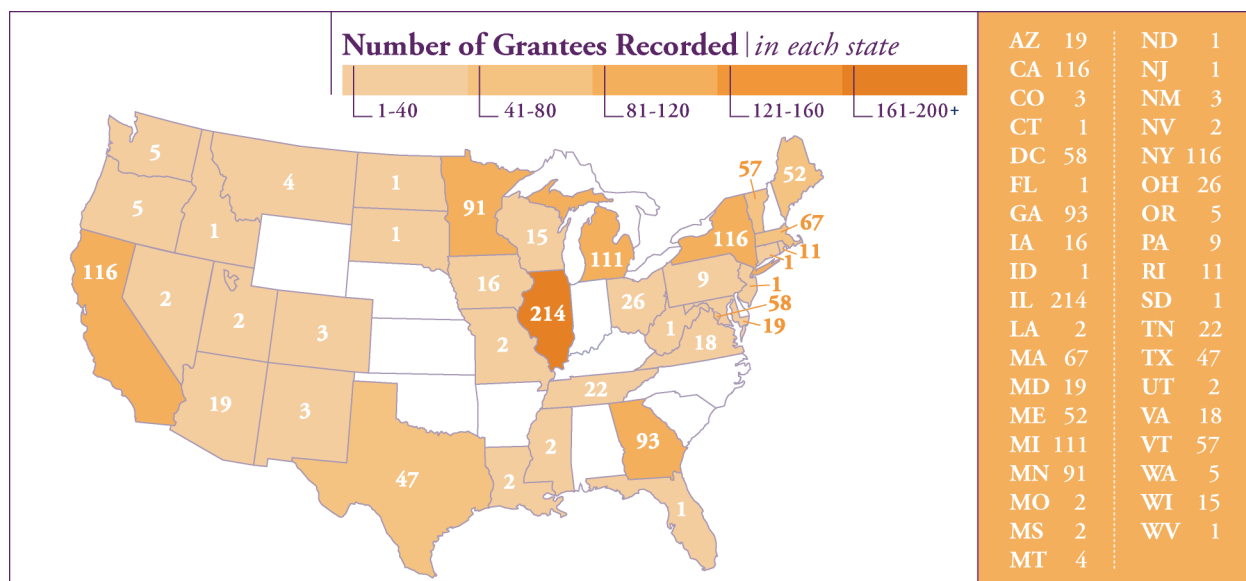
Who is in this mapping study—by geography?

This mapping project and report covers a wide array of women's funds in the United States. The sampling covers the work of 24 funds out of the 94 United States members of the Women's Funding Network (WFN). The geographic coverage of these 24 funds includes:

Funds Included	Grantmaking Area	Grants Recorded
1. Arizona Foundation for Women	Arizona	15
2. Atlanta Women's Foundation	Atlanta, GA	90
3. Boston Women's Fund	Boston, MA	51
4. Chahara Foundation	Massachusetts	11
5. Chicago Foundation for Women	Chicago, IL	170
6. Chrysalis Foundation	Des Moines, IA	15
7. Dallas Women's Foundation	Dallas	48
8. Girl's Best Friend Foundation	Chicago, IL	35
9. Maine Women's Fund	Maine	52
10. Michigan Women's Foundation	Michigan	60
11. Ms. Foundation for Women Inc.	National	144
12. Nokomis Foundation	Western Michigan	53
13. The New York Women's Foundation	New York City	60
14. The Sister Fund	National	21
15. The Women's Foundation of California	California	87
16. Third Wave Foundation	National	44
17. Vermont Women's Foundation	Vermont	56
18. Washington Area Women's Foundation	Washington DC	67
19. Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis	Greater Memphis	23
20. Women's Foundation of Genesee Valley	Northern New York	21
21. Women's Foundation of Minnesota	Minnesota	91
22. Women's Fund - Greater Milwaukee Foundation	Milwaukee	12
23. Women's Fund of Central Ohio	Columbus/Central Ohio	26
24. Women's Fund of Rhode Island	Rhode Island	11
TOTAL		1263
Note: Bold indicates funds that were also interviewed as part of the mapping process.		

Geography by location of grantees in the mapping project's data-base:

The chart below represents the location of the grantee by state. Some states, like Illinois, have a large number of grants included in the database, because more than one funder in the sample focuses on Illinois-based projects.



Grants Analysis:

The grants analysis included the following actions:

- Reviewed grants made by 24 funds over the past three (3) years including programs operated directly by women's funds.
- Sourced information from online fund information and grantee websites, where available.
- Studied grants, programs, research, and coalitions.
- Recorded shifts, strategic approaches, issue-themes/topics, beneficiaries and partners.
- Examined a total of 1,263 grant entries.

This is the most comprehensive snapshot of grants to women's organizations that has ever been done.



Leadership Interviews:

Further information was garnered from eleven funds:

- Conducted eleven (11) one-hour interviews.
- Focused on learning how women's funds leverage and support progressive social change through grantmaking, programs, and community leadership.

This mapping study collected data that substantially:

- Describes the funds and their grantees' use of social change "shifts" and specific action approaches.
- Analyzes the major issues and themes addressed by the grants, including specific examples.
- Defines the women's funding movement's "values at work" by showing the unusual philanthropic pattern of grantee partners/beneficiaries.

The study also includes some additional description of:

- The collaborative action and leverage employed by funds.
- The growing combined value and impact of the funds.
- The increasingly important role of women's funds in their communities and domains.





Findings of the Mapping Process

The Findings: Key Highlights

Women's Funds are finding power and making a difference at the intersection where margins and mainstream come together.

Action--

1. **Women's funds have the coherence of a tightly-knit strategic movement adhering to shared strategy and best practices rather than only the random cooperation of a network.** Women's funds invest 85% of their grants in a **top-ten** list of priorities with economic justice/development; gender-based violence and health issues leading the list. Most grants are focused on two main social change shifts or types: Changing Individual/Community Behavior and Increasing Engagement/Achieving Critical Mass and the funds invest first and foremost in empowering approaches like Skill Building and Training.
2. **Direct service grants by women's funds are either transformative...or canaries!** The grants go far beyond the usual definition of service by aiming for personal and/or community transformation. Women's funds service grants also concentrate on early identification and intervention into new and nearly invisible problems and needs, i.e. the "canary" issues. . .
3. **Collaborative action and leverage are valued and practiced.** Funds prioritize collaborative action in their strategies and grantmaking decisions and employ collective leveraging in problem-solving.
4. **Research-based analysis of needs, gaps and opportunities informs the strategic decisions made by women's funds.** Most funds have invested in demographic and trend analysis with external researchers in order to understand the status of women and girls.

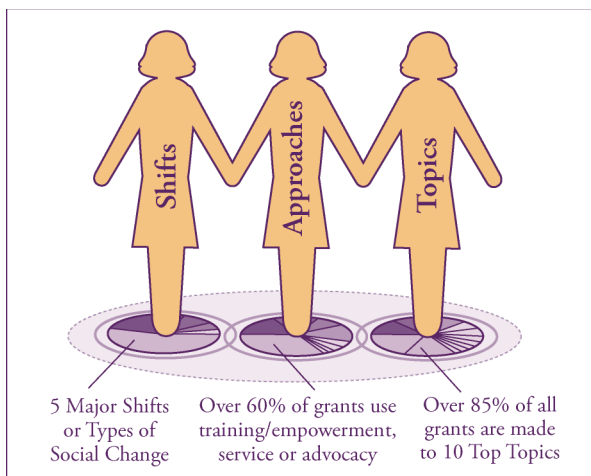
Who is served/engaged—Where money and values meet women and girls:

5. **Women's funds show a remarkable commitment to placing resources firmly in the hands of those directly impacted by the most challenging issues in our communities.** Almost 80% of women's funds' grants in the mapping database were directed exclusively or predominantly to poor and marginalized women and girls. All women's funds are dedicated to all women and engage women across class as donors but they are focused on enabling the poorest and most disenfranchised women in their struggle to survive and thrive.
6. **Diversity is a living value among women's funds.** In addition to reaching across class, women's funds also have a commitment to being inclusive of women by race, religion and ethnicity both as donors and grantees. Close to 75% of women's funds grants in the mapping database were directed to either multi-racial/ethnic groups or specific racial, religious and ethnic minorities or recent immigrants.



Impact

7. **Women's funds are nearing a tipping point of name recognition, leadership and public trust in their work** which is key to their future growth and influence in policy, philanthropy, and grassroots spheres.
8. **Women's funds are becoming the “go-to” institutions for questions, resources, ideas, and action about women and girls.** As endowment-based organizations as well as social action strategists women's funds have a stable presence and the ability to catalyze others.
9. **Among women's funds, “the whole is bigger than the sum of the parts.”** Peer-based learning is practiced by women's funds both in their relationships among each other and in how they engage and network their grantees/partners.



Overview of the Findings: The Shifts and Strategic Approaches

The “Shifts” and their Significance

The Women’s Funding Network has created a social change impact tool (“Making the Case”) that defines five types of social change action that can be used alone, in multiple combinations, or fully integrating all five. The shifts are defined as:

Defining/Reframing: An issue or idea is given new meaning. The community or society sees the issue differently as a result of your work, (e.g., rape is understood as a crime of violence with legal and civil consequences, not as a sexual transgression). Also referred to as Shift 1.

Individual/Community Behavior: An individual (and/or the community) does things differently and for the better, usually building a sense of personal empowerment. Individuals act differently and/or the community acts differently, (e.g., women seek appropriate health care for themselves and their family while the community is providing more care). Also referred to as Shift 2.

Critical Mass/Increasing Engagement: More people are engaged in an idea or action as a result of the work. Ideally, enough people get involved that they are noticed; voices are heard, and a critical mass or “tipping point” is reached in the sphere of influence, (e.g., individuals form groups, groups coalesce for broader impact, and numbers of people and organizations make a difference). Also referred to as Shift 3.

Institutions, Policy and Systems: Organizational, local, regional, national or international policies or practices have changed to better serve social change ideals, as a result of work (e.g., specific laws change and/or institutional systems change; things are done differently and better throughout a system). Also referred to as Shift 4.

Maintaining Position/Holding the Line: Earlier progress on issues is maintained in the face of opposition, and deep implementation activities make positive policy change a day-to-day reality (e.g., funding for breast cancer research is saved from budget cuts). Also referred to as Shift 5.

Most women’s funds devise their grantmaking and direct program strategies by combining several Shifts:

- Most commonly, the funds are concentrating their efforts in Individual/Community Behavior and Engagement/Awareness.
- Increasing numbers of funds are also adding Systems/Policy Change.
- Some funds are combining Individual/Community Behavior with Defining/Reframing.
- Others are combining Systems/Policy Change with Holding the Line.
- Some of the larger funds create a strategic framework that encompasses all five shifts.

Analysis of Grants by Shift

The table and chart below show the grants categorized by social change shift. While a particular grant may address several shifts, in this research each grant was coded with only one shift, reflecting the largest emphasis of the grant. Nearly 85% of all the grants focused on shifting the behavior of individuals and communities to create social change (more than half) and Critical Mass/Increasing Engagement.

Shifts	Grants
1-Definitions/Reframing	30
2-Individual/Community Behavior	642
3-Critical Mass/Increasing Engagement	363
4-Institutions, Policy and Systems	121
5-Maintaining Position/Holding the Line	24

Although most funds express an intent to do more policy work they are limited by their size and their perceptions about “what it takes” to fund systemic change.

Action Approaches

Most funds combine their use of the Shifts with particular combinations of action approaches (e.g., community organizing, use of media, direct services, etc.). Decisions about these action approaches are based on the scale of a fund’s resources, the scale of the problem, and best practices shared among funds through the Women’s Funding Network and among broader networks in philanthropy and social change. Below is a summary of the most common approaches for all shifts and all topics:

Action Approaches of Grants	
Skill Building/Training	360
Education	304
Job assistance	48
Technology	8
Service Delivery	207
Business assistance	22
Health care	26
Housing/homelessness	32
Mentoring	44
Therapy/case management	80
Transportation	3
Advocacy/Policy/Legal Action	187
Advocacy	93
Legal action	23
Political action	41
Systems change	30
Leadership Development	104
Linking/Networking/Coalitions; Convening	106
Media/Communications	61
Arts/Theatre	36
Sports and Fitness	35
Organizational Capacity Building	29
Voter Registration	22
Research/Documentation	18



The shared intent among women's funds to empower women and girls in their own lives and communities and changing the system is most often accomplished using one of in the top three approaches: Skills/Training; Services; Advocacy/Legal Actions. The following sections analyze deeper patterns of the approaches taken by the funds to the five types/shifts of social change.

The Findings: Shifts & Approaches in Detail

The Findings: Shift One – Definitions/Reframing

Increasingly, funds are using research and large-scale community participation efforts to understand, define, redefine, or reframe issues that affect women and girls. For example, the Global Fund for Women launched its first learning/giving circle on Human Trafficking in 1992, long before trafficking was accepted globally as a reality. The Global Fund's work -- along with the work of many local funds to intervene in homelessness and/or prostitution which is often linked to trafficking -- has been critical to building understanding and acceptance of the growing issue of human bondage/slavery.

The approaches used in Shift One grants include using mass media and research to change public opinion and ideas. Other grants use skill building and training to change people's minds about women's skills and talents. For example, several grants in Shift One focus on redefining historically male-careers (such as construction) as appropriate for women. Seven of the grants in Shift One focus on economic justice and development.

Approaches to Definitions/Reframing	Grants
Skill Building/Training	10
Media/Communications	5
Research/Documentation	4
Advocacy/Policy/Legal Action	4
Linking/Networking/Coalitions	2
Sports and Fitness	1
Service Delivery: Housing/homelessness	1
Organizational Capacity Building	1

The Findings: Shift Two—Individual and Community Behavior

The work of women's funds in shifting individual and community behavior often looks like direct service but goes far beyond service into individual and community transformation. In fact, it is unusual to find women's funds' grants that support well-established service delivery programs on a regular basis (e.g., the "United Way" role). The Individual and Community Behavior grants seem to include two main types:

1. **Transformative services.** These are intentionally designed to transform the person or the community, i.e., in receiving the service, the person or group is changed and empowered.
2. **"Canary" services.** Like canaries that were traditionally used in mines to provide the first signals of dangerous gas in the atmosphere, many ideas for women's services and interventions are the "canaries" in the community. Women are on the front lines of poverty, personal danger, survival. They see and experience issues that are often hidden by the prosperity or larger problems of the community as a whole. In trying to solve these problems, women often propose projects and new organizational ideas that have no "fit" with most funders, and yet, if nurtured, the projects provide signals about "explosive danger" ahead while revealing ingenuity and innovation in solving immediate problems.

The approaches to social change focus primarily on skill building and service delivery.

Approaches to Individual/Community Behavior	Grants
Skill Building/Training	302
Service Delivery	195
Sports and Fitness	31
Arts/Theatre	27
Leadership Development	21
Advocacy/Policy/Legal Action	20
Organizational Capacity Building	8
Media/Communications	5

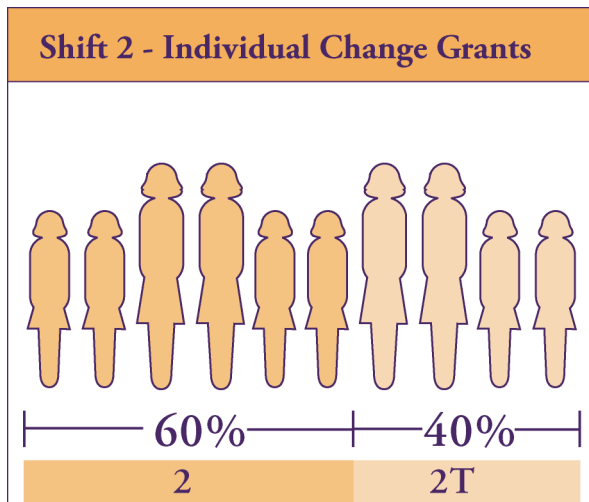
Shift Two – Transformational Grants

Gender-based violence is the most common topic among Shift Two grants. (Over 100 of the Shift Two grants focus on gender-based violence). This topic provides a good example of the range of individual changes grantees are creating. For example, while some gender-based violence grants provide a concrete service to help an individual woman in a time of crisis (such as housing for women who are victims of domestic violence), many other grants use the same type of service as a platform for other types of transformation. For example, women receive shelter, they learn financial literacy skills, and are taught how to advocate for changes in the legal system -- all in one program. Additionally, the provision of a direct service, like a shelter, is also transformational in the community in several of the grants. For example, some grants target domestic violence action with immigrants or refugees who may not have traditionally accessed these services, thus, creating a large ripple of transformation in the community -- beyond a single woman.

The importance of individual transformation is seen at the Women's Fund of Central Ohio which places a high priority on the transformative potential of each grantee. In their grant application they request a "pass it on plan" for each project. This plan helps the grantee articulate how changing an individual woman's life will, in turn, change her family, neighborhood or community.

In this mapping project, grants that extend the ripple of transformation beyond the individual woman who receives services or that catalyzes broader community transformation are called Shift Two—Transformational (2T). Of all Shift Two grants, the chart below shows 40% create this type of amplified social change.

The remaining 60% of these grants are simply described as "Service," but many have embedded within them the "canary" function: providing a first time service and/or bringing to light new problems, phenomena, and opportunities in the community.



In the interview with The Chrysalis Foundation, (Des Moines, Iowa), the following story emerged that could be categorized as both transformational and a "canary" service issue:

"We are always looking for projects and participants who are conscious of changes to be made. We funded a group of Latina women in a mobile home park. With our local Coalition of Housing we helped them to get educated about their rights as renters. But then they went to the Capitol to speak about what they learned and what they needed and the result was a policy change in renters' rights in our state! It was intended to be transformational for the individual women—giving them the skills to understand landlord and tenant laws. But then they took it a step further and decided to fix what was broken!"

The Findings: Shift Three—Critical Mass/Increasing Engagement

As a society, we have become convinced of the significance of getting to a "tipping point" when trying to make changes. Most of the time, a tipping point requires a critical mass of people who see, recognize, articulate, and are willing to act on a perceived belief or problem. A tipping point doesn't require a critical mass of the entire general public; it requires a critical mass of a designated group or leaders with interests in and responsibilities for a particular problem or issue. Building this type of engagement and commitment is the second most popular strategic aim of women's funds and the work they fund with their grantees and partners.

The Funds believe in funding grantees to use a variety of approaches in gaining more supporters and allies. These grants frequently focus on building the leadership capacity of women who have been traditionally marginalized. For example, one of the largest topics is building the leadership of immigrant women. Forty-six of the Shift Three grants (out of 358) focus on building leadership among this group.

Approaches to Definitions/Reframing	Grants
Linking/Networking/Coalitions	96
Leadership Development	80
Media/Communications	44
Skill Building/Training	42
Advocacy/Policy/Legal Action: Advocacy	31
Voter Registration	22
Advocacy/Policy/Legal Action	13
Arts/Theatre	9
Research/Documentation	8
Organizational Capacity Building	5
Sports and Fitness	2

Out of the 358 grants, 56 focus on increasing engagement in the area of domestic violence. This includes many public campaigns to increase awareness and prevent violence, but several of these grants also include leadership development for women who have been victims of gender-based violence. For example, one grant made by the Third Wave Foundation focuses on helping to organize women who are being prostituted. The purpose was “to develop the capacity of young women ages 12-23 directly impacted by the sex trade in Chicago to organize, share information with, and advocate for themselves.”

Another grant from the Women’s Foundation of California supported the organizing of low-income Korean immigrant women in the Los Angeles restaurant

industry, including grassroots organizing, educational workshops and leadership development. The strategy of helping women, who have been marginalized, to lead on the issues that directly affect them is a hallmark of Shift Three grants from women’s funds.

One option pursued by just a few funds is Voter Registration. However, with its national scope, the Ms. Foundation for Women, Inc. has made a substantial number of grants throughout the country for voter registration.

Most of the executive directors said they need to do more with media in building engagement but noted the high costs of this approach. One fund, The Women’s Foundation of California, operates a donor circle on Race, Gender and Human Rights; the circle is developing a public campaign (including media and advertising) to accompany its work.

The Findings: Shift Four – Policy and Systemic Change

Many funds believe that much of what they fund is ultimately about “advocacy” since every grant is aimed at progressive social change. Empowerment of others and lifting women’s voices are drumbeats accompanying strategic approaches used by funds in fostering all the other shifts. However, many funds are now beginning to move into explicit policy-based work.

The funds most actively support:

- “Advocacy” and the development of advocacy leadership, enabling grantees to support policy changes and points of view.
- New models for systemic change, demonstrating new ideas and solutions.
- Research, particularly the documentation of the lives of women and girls in their communities.

Approaches to Policy & Systemic Change	Grants
Advocacy/Policy/Legal Action:	103
Advocacy	52
Political action/Lobbying	28
Systems change	19
Research/Documentation	6
Legal action	4
Linking/Networking/Coalitions	4
Media/Communications	4
Skill Building/Training: Education	2
Sports and Fitness	1

Some funds support litigation and law reform along with the lobbying that is allowable within their limitations. Again, most Executive Directors expressed the belief that a combination of approaches on any issue or thematic focus is the most effective.

Gender-based violence is the most common focus for Policy and Systems change work, followed closely by economic justice. Here are examples of each:

- The Chicago Foundation for Women funded a project to create systems change through a grant to develop a model for an “empowerment-courtroom” which fundamentally alters institutional approaches to specialized domestic violence courtrooms.
- The Third Wave Foundation made a grant to The Vermont Living Wage Campaign; a state-wide coalition of local livable wage groups, unions, non-profit advocacy organizations and individuals united to build a statewide movement of working people and their allies to win livable wages, demonstrates advocacy in the area of economic justice and development.

In the interviews, the funds’ leaders reflected on some of the specific social change issues policy-change campaigns they have funded. Some of these included:

- Housing revitalization
- Female child prostitution
- Homelessness
- Licensing childcare
- Living wage campaigns
- Advocacy with local water boards to prevent fees for potable water
- Anti-Slavery/Human Trafficking
- Financial literacy
- Anti-violence
- AIDS action
- Immigrant health education

The funds characterized the success of their work as “highly effective” or as “having some noticeable impact,” though most agreed that their issues are so big the change achieved never feels like a completion.

The Findings: Shift Five – Maintaining Position/Holding the Line

Grants in this area are aimed at ensuring that earlier progress on issues is maintained in the face of opposition. Additional activities may focus on deep implementation of activities that make a positive policy change a day-to-day reality. While the overall percentage of grants in this area is relatively small, the impact is concentrated in just a few topic areas and funders. Of the 24 grants in shift, 20 focus on reproductive rights. Most focus on holding the line on abortion rights, particularly in states where legislative changes are pending. Half of the grants in this shift come from the Ms. Foundation for Women’s Reproductive Rights Coalition and Organizing Fund. This Fund awards grants to coalitions who are organizing for social change. They also provide opportu-

nities for the grantees to network with one another and build the overall capacity of the reproductive rights movement. Examples of grants from the Ms. Foundation for Women include a grant initiating Latina Advocacy Networks (for reproductive rights) in key states and localities, as well as several grants for organizing campaigns aimed at enhancing access to comprehensive reproductive healthcare.

Approaches to Maintaining Position/ Holding the Line	Grants
Advocacy/Policy/Legal Action	14
Linking/Networking/Coalitions	3
Service Delivery	3
Organizational Capacity Building	2
Media/Communications	1
Leadership Development	1

The Findings: Topics & Approaches in Detail

The Findings: Priorities—Topics

Women's Funds and supporting a broad array of issues that are important to their visions, missions, and geography that are uniquely combined to formulate strategies that are "right" for each Fund. The Funds strategically share enormous common ground. Most of the grants are concentrated in ten major thematic issues that intersect to make the difference in survival at the margins and create sustainability in the mainstream. These "top-ten" topics account for over 80% of all the grants. As a result, women's funds have the impressive coherence of a movement adhering to shared strategy and best practices rather than the random cooperation of a casual network. This coherence give women's funds the potential to make social change across many boundaries without requiring any fund to give up their autonomy, unique roots or identity.

Rank	Top 10 Topics of Grants	Grants
1	Economic justice/development	187
	Economic justice/development	168
	Financial literacy	19
2	Gender-based violence	186
	Gender-based violence	151
	Prostitution/sex trade	19
	Child abuse	16
3	Health	136
	Health	124
	Health – environmental	12
4	Education	102
	Education	71
	Early childhood education	23
	Technology	8
5	Empowerment	101
	Empowerment: girls	90
	Empowerment	11
6	Political rights/civic participation	80
7	Reproductive rights	78
	Reproductive rights	64
	Sex Education	14
8	Immigrant/refugee rights	66
9	Housing/homelessness	45
10	Criminal justice/incarceration	44

Additional topics with at least six grants recorded included the categories below:

Rank	Other topics of Women's Funds Grants	Grants
11	Arts/theatre	32
12	Sexual Rights/LGBT	28
13	Teen pregnancy	24
14	Disability rights and services	18
15	Leadership development	11
16	Organizational capacity building	10
17	Discrimination/Racism	10
18	Education: Science and math	8
19	Sports and fitness	8
20	Faith-based initiatives	7
21	Human rights	7
22	Aging	6
23	Environment	6



The Findings: The Top Ten Topics

In each of the top ten topics, women's funds across the U.S. are using parallel strategies and high-leverage partnerships to make a difference. The Women's Funding Network and the funds do not use a process of voting or mandating priorities among common topics, rather, the funds' analysis of women's needs engage them in common work which is then shared and mined for insights and best practice ideas. The following pages explore the ten major thematic issues and how funds are working in parallel ways towards a common vision.

1. Women's Economic Justice/Development

Throughout The Women's Funding Network's membership, the member funds are nearly unanimous on the need to focus some of their resources on Economic Justice/Development. This topic was named as a priority among all 11 of the funds interviewed; 15% of the grants analyzed deal directly with Economic Justice/Development:

- Portion of analyzed grants: 15%
- Identified as a strategic priority: 11 of 11 funds interviewed

The Economic Justice and Development grants use four of the social change shifts, but focus most heavily on individual and community transformation. As seen in the examples below, engagement of low income women as leaders emerges as a common strategy. No "holding the line" grants were found.

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Social Change Shifts to Achieve Economic Justice/Development Grants

Shift Abbreviation	Economic Justice/ Development	Economic Justice/Development: Financial Literacy	Grand Total
1 - Defining	7		7
2 – Individual Change	45	14	59
2T – Individual Transformation	47	5	52
3 - Engagement	35		35
4 – Policy and Systems	19		19

Most of the funds work on Economic Justice/Development by using a skill building or training approach; while many also provide support for organizing efforts, (e.g., living wage campaigns).

Approaches used in Economic Justice/Development Grant (with at least 5 grants)

Approach	Economic Justice/ Development	Economic Justice/Development: Financial Literacy	Grand Total
Skill Building/Training	67	15	82
Advocacy/Policy/Legal Action	17		17
Service Delivery	26	4	30
Leadership Development	14		14
Linking/Networking/Coalitions	11		11
Media/Communications	7		7
Organizational Capacity Building	7		7

Examples of the Economic Justice/Development grantmaking:

- In 2000 – 2001 the Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis narrowed their focus to women's economic independence. They funded a wide range of strategies to help women prosper including job readiness, business assistance, and financial education. However, this focus has not completely limited funding of other areas since issues like health care and child care are keys to women's economic independence.

The Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis views this focused strategy as a key tool in their ability to garner more support and be seen as a leader in Memphis.

- The Washington Area Women's Foundation grant to Capital Commitment Inc. prepares welfare recipients and others at risk for poverty with high-paying, traditionally male jobs in telecommunications. Outcomes include a placement rate of 97% with more than 200 women graduating from the program earning \$25,000 as an average starting salary.

- For several years the Women's Foundation of Genesee Valley funded Ausangate Creations' program, "Women's Coffee Connection." This grassroots organization provides paid, pre-employment job training over a 1- 2 year period for 12 women in drug/alcohol recovery programs and on welfare. The women learn retail sales skills, customer service, inventory management, as well as personal management skills. They serve customers, and make, package, and label coffee that is grown by farmers who have pledged not to grow cocaine. The program's goal is for women to "graduate" to gainful, full-time employment.
- The Women's Fund of Central Ohio provided \$10,000 to the "Getting Ahead" program of Licking County's Mental Health Association. The program assists 25 women living in poverty in analyzing their own situations, developing their own plans, and supporting them in taking action to end generational poverty. By teaching these skills, women have the chance to escape from poverty and achieve economic independence.

2. Gender-Based Violence

Gender-Based Violence continues to be a prominent area of focus for women's funds. While all funds made grants in this area, only 5 of the 11 interviewed specifically named it as a strategic priority:

- Portion of analyzed grants: 15%
- Identified as a strategic priority: 5 of 11 funds interviewed

Out of all of the topics, Gender-Based Violence has the highest number of Shift Two grants (Individual and Community Transformation), perhaps indicating the ongoing need for direct services that support women who are victims of domestic violence. Notably, the Shift Three - Engagement grants also are a large category. Grants to end Prostitution and Sex Trafficking also use policy as a means for social change.

Social Change Shifts Used in Gender Based Violence Grants

Shift Abbreviation	Gender-based Violence	Child Abuse	Prostitution-Sex Trade	Grand Total
1 - Defining	3	1		4
2 – Individual Change	66	2	1	69
2T – Individual Transformation	18	4	6	28
3 - Engagement	43	7	6	56
4 – Policy and Systems	15	1	5	21
5 - Holding the Line	1			1

The approaches deployed with Gender-Based Violence grants give more insight into the individual change grants. Service delivery and skill building/training approaches are applied in large measure. Many grants also teach women how to advocate for themselves, while others utilize public campaigns with media and communications to change people's ideas about Gender-Based Violence.

Approaches used in Gender-Based Violence Grants (with 5 or more grants)

Approach	Gender based violence	Child abuse	Prostitution-sex trade	Grand Total
Service delivery	43	3	2	48
Skill building/Training	32	4	2	38
Advocacy/Policy/Legal Action	31	2	8	41
Linking/Networking/Coalitions	16	4	1	21
Media/Communications	12	1	1	14
Organizational capacity building	6			6
Leadership development	5	1	3	9

Examples exist of Gender-Based Violence grantmaking at all age levels:

- The Michigan Women's Foundation provided \$4,100 in 2005 to Safe Haven Ministries. This program takes girls, ages 6 – 12, out of child care settings offering activities and opportunities to learn about domestic violence while simultaneously addressing issues that violence has brought into their young lives.
- In 2005, the Girls' Best Friend Foundation granted \$16,500 to the Women & Gender Research Initiative's program, "Take Back the Halls: Ending Violence in Relationships and Schools." This program was a school-based empowerment program designed to prevent relationship violence among teens. Teens explored domestic violence, sexual assault, and sexual abuse, as well as the variety of social structures that facilitate violence in our culture.



- The New York Women's Foundation has funded the Battered Women's Resource Center, Inc. for several years. The funding allowed continuation of their leadership development training and organizing project for victims of domestic violence. These initiatives targeted improvements in New York City's governmental systems and services for battered women and their children.

To many populations:

- In 2004, The Ms. Foundation for Women, Inc.'s Safety Initiative gave \$20,000 to the "Men Can Stop Rape" program that supports initiatives designed to end men's violence against women by shifting men's culture of violence and redefining masculinity.
- In 2004, The Washington Area Women's Foundation granted \$10,000 to the Asian Women's Self-Help Association. This program serves the women of the South Asian community with a comprehensive variety of culturally sensitive services with the central aim of ending abuse, and raising awareness surrounding violence in the South Asian community.

On several facets of the issue:

- In 2004, the Chicago Foundation for Women provided \$15,000 to the Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights. The project funded the Midwest Immigrant & Human Rights Center who delivers legal services to women and girls that are victims of human trafficking and gender-based persecution.
- In 2006, the Arizona Foundation for Women funded "Second Opinion," a program for abused children which connects them with doctors in bigger cities so they don't have to undergo several multiple examinations.



3. Health Issues

Many of the health projects supported by women's funds focus on "edge" issues in health, i.e., those health concerns that have not yet received mainstream attention. Most grants focus on education about health and advocacy, not the direct delivery of services.

- Portion of analyzed grants: 11%
- Identified as a strategic priority: 6 of 11 funds interviewed

The approaches in health grants demonstrate the "edge" pattern noted above. While only three grants are focused on the Defining/Reframing shift, this is significant since, overall, there are so few reframing/redefining grants. Also, a large number of grants create social change through individual change and transformation.

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Social Change Shifts Used in Health Grants

Shift Abbreviation	Health	Health - environmental	Grand Total
1 – Defining	3		3
2 – Individual Change	67	2	69
2T – Individual Transformation	25		25
3 – Engagement	14	6	20
4 – Policy and Systems	13	3	16
5 - Holding the Line	1		1

Compared to the other topics, health grants utilize fewer different approaches, though skill building and training still remain in the top spot. Of all of the service delivery grants, only 14 specifically provided for the provision of health care.

Approaches of Health Grants (with 5 or more grants)

Approach	Health	Health - environmental	Grand Total
Skill Building/Training	43	5	48
Service Delivery	28		28
Advocacy/Policy/Legal Action	18	4	22
Leadership Development	12	2	14
Sports and Fitness	8		8

Examples of Health Grants:

- In 2004, the Ms. Foundation for Women Inc. gave \$10,000 from the Women and AIDS Fund to the Southwest Boulevard Family Health Care for HIV University. The purpose was to get HIV positive women involved with local HIV/AIDS planning councils and challenging public policy at local and state levels.
- In 2005, The Atlanta Women's Foundation gave \$10,000 to the Atlanta Lesbian Cancer Initiative to promote the health and well-being of lesbians through education, advocacy and support services.
- In 2005, The Girl's Best Friend Foundation gave \$16,500 to the Illinois caucus for Adolescent Health for an initiative on adolescent sexual health and youth/parent issues in Illinois.
- In 2004-2005, The Women's Foundation of California gave \$10,000 to the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition to support economic and environmental justice work directed at promoting occupational health for low-wage, high-tech workers who are predominately Asian and Latina immigrant women.
- In 2004, The Boston Women's Foundation funded The Kitchen Table Conversations Project whose goal is to save Mass Health by petitioning, holding community meetings, speaking at rallies, and meeting with health-care administrators and providers to increase services and access to low-income women and families.

4. Education

Grants for education are predominantly girl-focused with a particular emphasis on math and science. Many grants also focus on girls' empowerment; these are usually categorized as individual transformation.

- Portion of analyzed grants: 8%
- Identified as a strategic priority: 2 of 11 funds interviewed

Not surprisingly, education grants focus on Shift Two, Individual and Community Transformation.



Shifts of Education grants

Shift Abbreviation	Education	Education: Early Childhood Education	Education: Science and Math	Education: Technology	Grand Total
1 - Defining	2		2		4
2 – Individual Change	29	10	3	6	48
2T – Individual Transformation	20	2	3		25
3 - Engagement	12	8		1	21
4 – Policy and Systems	4	3		1	8

Similarly, education grants utilize skill building/training as the primary approach to achieving social change. However, leadership development and policy change are particularly important in early childhood education grants.

Approaches to Education Grants (with 5 or more grants)

Approaches	Education	Early Childhood Education	Science and Math	Technology	Grand Total
Skill Building/Training	34	7	7	6	54
Service Delivery	7	2		2	11
Leadership Development	3	5	1		9
Advocacy/Policy/Legal Action	4	4			8
Sports and Fitness	8				8

Examples of Education Grants:

- In 2004, The Ms. Foundation for Women Inc. and their “Women and Labor Fund” gave \$15,000 to the Family Childcare Association of San Francisco Peer Advocates program. The funding provided recruitment and training for 20 peer advocates that assist providers in resolving problems and disputes arising from childcare subsidy contracts and payments from licensing agencies.
- In 2005, The Boston Women’s Foundation gave \$9,555 to the Science Club for Girls to alleviate the gender and racial gap in science and technology by increasing girls’ confidence, understanding, and enjoyment of science.
- In 2006, The Atlanta Women’s Foundation gave \$13,000 to the Atlanta Girls’ School for the first, independent, single-gender, educational option for girls in Atlanta in 30 years. Athletic programming at AGS provides opportunities for girls to develop skills for long-term health and fitness, while experiencing responsibility, teamwork, leadership, and competition.

5. Empowerment

Most funds work in multiple ways across all strategies to listen to and lift up women’s and girls’ voices while engaging them in changing their own lives and their communities. These grants typically utilize a holistic approach to both prevention and intervention with girls.

- Portion of analyzed grants: 8%
- Identified as a strategic priority: 5 of 11 funds interviewed

Most grants in the empowerment area focus on serving girls:

Who does the program serve?

Girls	Women	Both Women and Girls
76	11	3

The grants focus direct transformation of the girls with almost all of the grants addressing Shift Two:

Social Change Shifts Used to Achieve Empowerment

Shift	Grants
2 – Individual Change	34
2T – Individual Transformation	46
3 – Engagement	19

Empowerment grants primarily use skill building and training to create social change with girls:

Approaches of Empowerment Grants (with 5 of more grants)

Approach	Grand Total
Skill building/Training	44
Leadership Development	18
Service Delivery	15
Sports and Fitness	8

Examples of Empowerment Grants:

- In 2005, The Atlanta Women’s Foundation funded the Youth Communications: Metro Atlanta program “Epiphany Girls Group & Campaign to End Sexual Assault & Harassment,” a teen-created, girls only space where girls ages 13-19 discuss, write and publish about the issues they face giving public voice to their experiences and dreams.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2005, The Dallas Women's Foundation funded Girl's Inc, an agency that encourages girls to create their own identity, develop their potential, and grow in their sense of responsibility to self, family, and community. • In 2004, The Maine Women's Fund gave \$4,850 to Mainely Girls: Girl's Action Group. This support group is designed to help girls find the inner resources to become strong women. • In 2004, 2005, and 2006, The New York Women's Foundation gave \$30,000, \$30,000, and \$35,000 respectively to Ifetayo Cultural Arts Facility, Inc. for continuation of their Sisters in Sisterhood program. This program ushers girls through the minefield of adoles- 	<p>cence, preparing them to graduate as confident and focused young women with clear goals and aspirations for their future. More specifically, the funding targeted the recently expanded service level of young women and girls of African descent living in Flatbush, Brooklyn and its surrounding neighborhoods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2005, The Girl's Best Friend Foundation gave \$16,500 to Street-Level Youth Media's "Female Action Voice," a media arts program for high-school-aged young women to explore gender issues in a safe, supportive, and participatory environment. Using video production, computer arts, and the Internet, young women address community issues, access advanced communication technology, and gain insight into the information-based society.

6. Reproductive Rights

Women's funds identify reproductive issues in a broad context of reproductive rights and freedom, emphasizing education about reproduction and full access to services.

- Portion of analyzed grants: 6%
- Identified as a strategic priority: 6 of 11 funds interviewed

Out of all of the topic areas, Reproductive Rights has the most grants in "Holding the Line" Shift Five. Notably, it is one of only three topic areas where the majority of grants lie outside of Shift Two, Individual/Community Transformation.

Shifts of Reproductive Rights Grants

Shifts	Reproductive Rights	Sex Education	Grand Total
1 - Defining		1	1
2 – Individual Change	9	5	14
2T – Individual Transformation	1	1	2
3 - Engagement	21	3	24
4 – Policy and Systems	10	4	14
5 – Holding the Line	20		20

Most grants in reproductive rights are concerned about advocacy, policy, and convening; fewer are involved with direct service delivery.

Reproductive Rights Approaches	Grants
Advocacy/Policy/Legal Action	25
Advocacy	17
Political action	7
Systems change	1
Linking/Networking/Coalitions	13
Service Delivery	10
Health care	5
Therapy/case management	5
Media/Communications	4
Leadership Development	3
Skill Building/Training	3
Organizational Capacity Building	1
Research/Documentation	1
Voter Registration	1



Examples of Reproductive Rights Grants:

- In 2004, The Chicago Foundation for Women gave \$20,000 to the Roger Baldwin Foundation of the ACLU's Reproductive Rights Project for the purpose of protecting the rights of individuals to decide freely, without governmental hindrance or coercion, whether and when to have a child. This fund is currently challenging a federal ban on abortion that contains no health exception for pregnant women.
- In 2006, The Maine Women's Fund granted \$7,000 to the Family Planning Association of Maine to insure that the people of Maine have comprehensive family planning services, sexuality education, continued rights to privacy, and free choice in all matters relating to reproductive health and sexuality.
- In 2004, The Ms. Foundation for Women gave \$10,000 to the Black Women's Health Imperative, Consensus process, to create a nationwide infrastructure joining communities of black women who are poised for national action and to support community-based advocacy campaigns on reproductive health issues affecting Black women.
- In 2004 – 2005, The Women's Foundation of California granted \$25,000 to the California Coalition for Reproductive Freedom for general operating support. Specifically, the grant supports comprehensive reproductive rights and access to reproductive healthcare and education for all California women by maintaining an effective working coalition of organizations in California representing a broad range of disciplines, spiritual beliefs, ethnicities and ages.

7. Political Rights/Civic Participation

At the heart of social change by and for women is the willingness of women to participate in civic and political life—from voting to holding political office.

- Portion of analyzed grants: 6%
- Identified as a strategic priority: 4 of 11 funds interviewed

For women's funds and their grantees achieving Political Rights and Civic Participation requires Shift 3/ Engagement, the largest number of grants compared with Shift Two, Individual Transformation.

Shifts of Political Rights/Civic Participation Grants

Shift Abbreviation	Political Rights/Civic Participation
1 - Defining	1
2 – Individual Change	2
2T – Individual Transformation	2
3 - Engagement	58
4 – Policy and Systems	13

Approaches to Political Rights/Civic Participation Grants vary from other topics. In this topic area, approaches center on advocacy, voter registration, and leadership development.

Approaches to Political Rights and Civic Participation

Approach	Political Rights/Civic Participation
Advocacy/Policy/Legal	25
Voter Registration	15
Leadership Development	11
Linking/Networking/Coalitions	10
Skill Building/Training: Education	7
Media/Communications	5

Examples of Political Rights/Civic Participation Grants:

- In 2004 – 2005, The Women's Fund of Central Ohio funded the John Glenn Institute for Public Service and Public Policy's "NEW Leadership Ohio" program for the purpose of empowering a new generation of women leaders, inspiring a strong interest in policy making and political work, and encouraging them to run for public office.
- In 2005 – 2006, The Women's Fund of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation gave \$10,000 to the Nine to Five Working Women Education Foundation's "Removing Barriers to Economic Self Sufficiency" program to engage low income women as leaders in critical public policy arenas involved with improving the lives of low wage workers.
- In 2004, The Washington Area Women's Foundation gave \$5,000 to the Tenants & Workers Support Committee's "Pa'Adelante/ Moving Forward Program" of the TWSC UNITY Chapter to promote the empowerment of low-income tenants, workers, women, and youth through community organizing, education, leadership, and self-help initiatives.

8. Immigrant/Refugee Rights

The support by women's funds for immigrant and refugee women is focused mainly on empowering women to be change agents.

- Portion of analyzed grants: 5%
- Identified as a strategic priority: 1 of 11 funds interviewed

Overwhelmingly, grants focused on immigrant/refugee rights work to achieve progress within Shift Three Engagement.

Social Change Shifts Used for Immigrant/Refugee Rights Grants

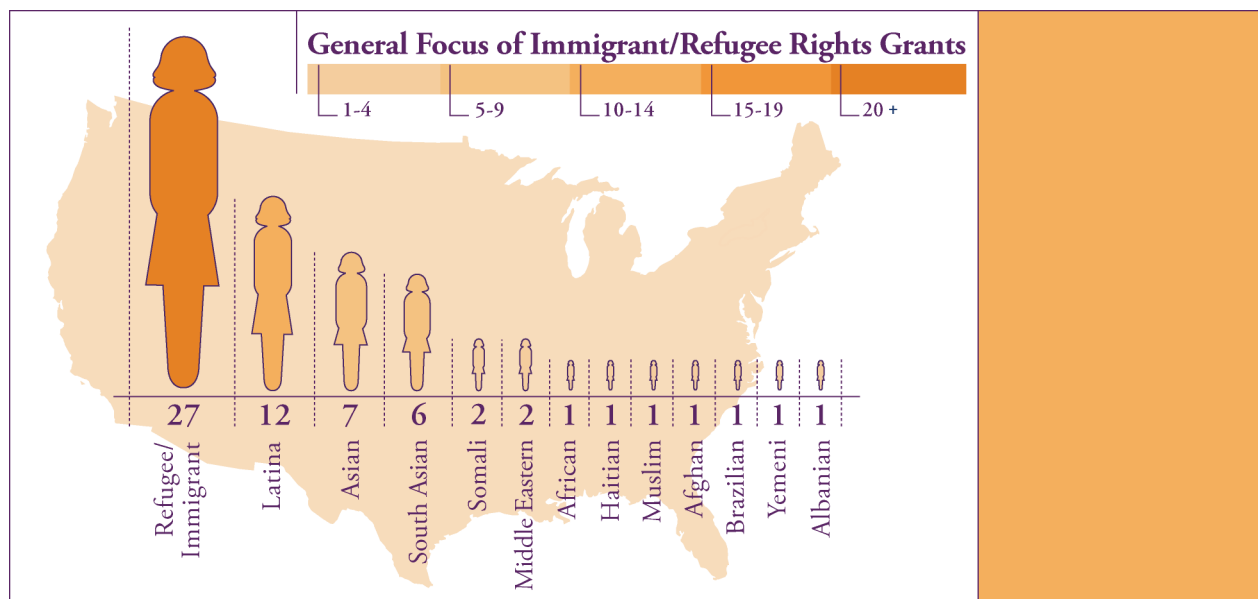
Shift Abbreviation	Immigrant/Refugee Rights
1 - Defining	1
2 - Individual Change	6
2T - Individual Transformation	6
3 - Engagement	46
4 - Policy and Systems	6

Like the civic participation grants above, immigrant and refugee rights grants focus on a combination of leadership development and advocacy as well as a strong emphasis on building skills.

Approaches of Immigrant/Refugee Rights Grants (with 5 or more grants)

Skill Building/Training	16
Linking/Networking/Coalitions	14
Advocacy/Policy/Legal Action	11
Leadership Development	10

The array of immigrant and refugee origins assisted through women's funds' grants is an interesting indicator of the vast diversity of immigrant and refugee experiences in communities throughout the U.S. The chart below categorizes grants that are specifically focused on immigrant and refugee rights. Many more grants focused on other topics also serve women of diverse backgrounds. (See the description of clients later):



Examples:

- In 2004, The Boston Women's Foundation funded the Adbar Ethiopian Women's Alliance for the purpose of empowering and strengthening Ethiopian women and girls by encouraging them to become agents of change and to enhance the status of Ethiopian women through community organizing, advocacy, and service using culturally appropriate strategies.
- In 2004, The Chicago Foundation for Women granted \$7,500 to The Khmer Angels Teen Girls Club of the Cambodian Association of Illinois to provide youth a safe place where they can celebrate their identity as Cambodian Americans and participate in cultural, structured activities that encourage academic performance and life-enriching skills.
- In 2004 – 2005, The Women's Foundation of California gave \$5,000 to the California Coalition for Women Prisoners program, "Compañeras," to work with Latina immigrant women prisoners in building a movement for gaining full human rights and ending the criminalization and exploitation of immigrants and immigrant prisoners.

9. Housing/Homelessness

Housing grants focus more on advocacy; while Homelessness grants focus mainly on services.

- Portion of analyzed grants: 4%
- Identified as a strategic priority: 2 of 11 funds interviewed

The housing/homelessness grants focus predominantly on Individual and Community Behavior Transformation shifts/Shift Two. Many of the grants responded to the dire circumstances of women (and families) at the farthest points in the margins:

Social Change Shifts Used for Housing and Homelessness Grants

Shift	Housing/Homelessness
1 – Defining	2
2 – Individual Change	24
2T – Individual Transformation	10
3 – Engagement	7
4 – Policy and Systems	1

Housing and Homelessness programs employ direct service and skill building approaches:

Approaches of Housing and Homelessness Grants (with 5 or more grants)

Approach	Housing/Homelessness
Service Delivery	25
Skill Building/Training	11

Examples

- In 2005, The Chrysalis Foundation granted \$6,000 to The Home Connection to provide services for homeless single mothers with minor children including assessment, support services, education, and preventive healthcare designed to assure their ability to become self-sufficient.
- In 2004, The Vermont Women's Foundation gave \$4,000 to the Central Vermont Community Action Council program, "Emergency Assistance & Life Skills Development for Women At Risk for Homelessness," to provide emergency assistance and life skills training to women managing solo households and facing eviction or foreclosure.
- In 2004 – 2005, The Women's Foundation of California granted \$10,000 to Strategic Actions for a Just Economy for the purpose of supporting community organizing and policy advocacy work, particularly with women of color. More specifically, the grant addressed issues related to the gentrification of the Figueroa Corridor in Los Angeles.

10. Criminal Justice/Incarceration

The population of women in prison is growing rapidly with most being first time offenders. This profile speaks of an urgent need for effective prison transition programs that enable women to return to their families and communities after serving first-time sentences.

- Portion of analyzed grants: 3%
- Identified as a strategic priority: 2 of 11 funds interviewed

Criminal Justice grants tend to focus on achieving social change through individual and community transformation.

Shifts of Criminal Justice Grants

Shifts	Criminal Justice/Incarceration
2 – Individual Change	14
2T – Individual Transformation	16
3 – Engagement	9
4 – Policy and Systems	4

The approach of criminal justice grants follows the pattern of other topics utilizing skill building/training and service delivery.

Approach of Criminal Justice/Incarceration Grants

Approaches	Grants
Skill Building/Training	15
Service Delivery	10
Advocacy/Policy/Legal Action	8
Arts/Theatre	4
Linking/Networking/Coalitions	3
Media/Communications	2
Organizational Capacity Building	1

Examples:

- In 2005, The Chrysalis Foundation gave \$5,000 to the Mitchellville Theater Project to assist incarcerated women in developing self-confidence, self-esteem, and successful re-entry into the community upon release.
- In 2005, The Girls' Best Friend Foundation granted \$16,500 to the Music Theater Workshop's "Fabulous Females" project, a play-writing and performance program for young women incarcerated in the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center of Chicago, and recently released young women living in the Warrenville Illinois Youth Center.
- In 2005, The Sister Fund gave \$10,000 to the Women's Advocate Ministry in Courts & Jails to provide outreach, crisis intervention, referral and supportive services to women and their children at the Rose M. Singer correctional facility.

- Over 77% of women's funds grants in the mapping database were directed exclusively or predominantly to poor and marginalized women and girls.
- 15% of grants in the database serve women and girls of all economic classes.
- Only four grants reported serving middle or upper income participants exclusively.
- Approximately 8% of grants (100) did not have identifiable information about the income level of participants.

Income category	Grantees
Low income predominantly	427
Low income mostly	411
All income levels	258
Not identified	100
Middle-upper income	4

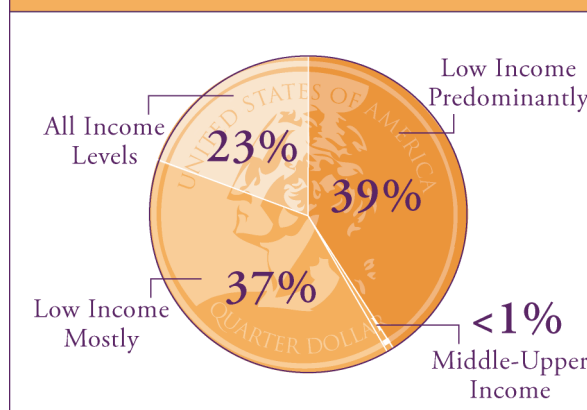
Findings: Populations Served are Emblematic of Values and Theory of Change

Women's funds, with their partner grantees, are committed to reach all women, with an emphasis on women and girls with the greatest needs and fewest resources.

Income levels

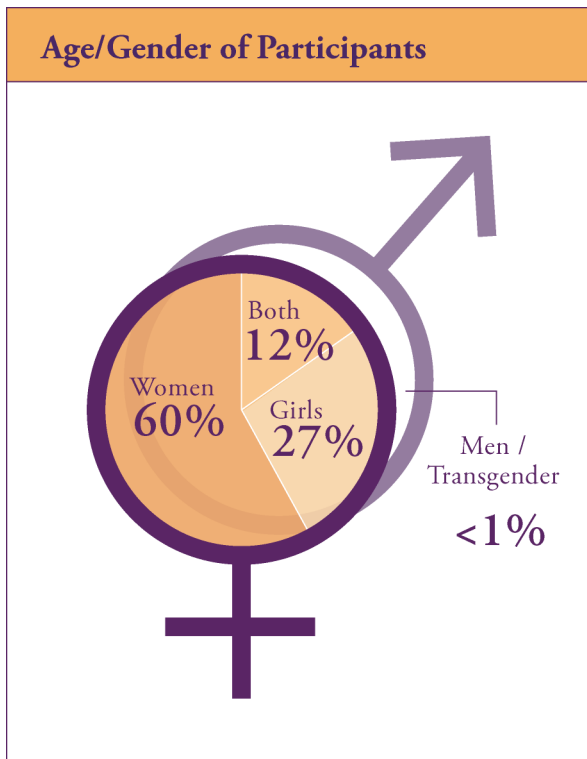
Women's funds show a remarkable commitment to placing resources firmly at the heart of the most challenging issues of our communities. To make social change in these areas means directing resources to low income women and girls.

Income of Participants



Women's funds demonstrate their desire for long term social change by funding projects that benefit women, girls and men. As noted, nearly two-thirds of the grants serve women, while approximately one-third focus on girls. Within the women's grants, only a few explicitly focus on older women despite the poverty statistics associated with aging women.

Women	708
Girls	322
Both	140
Men	4
Transgender	3

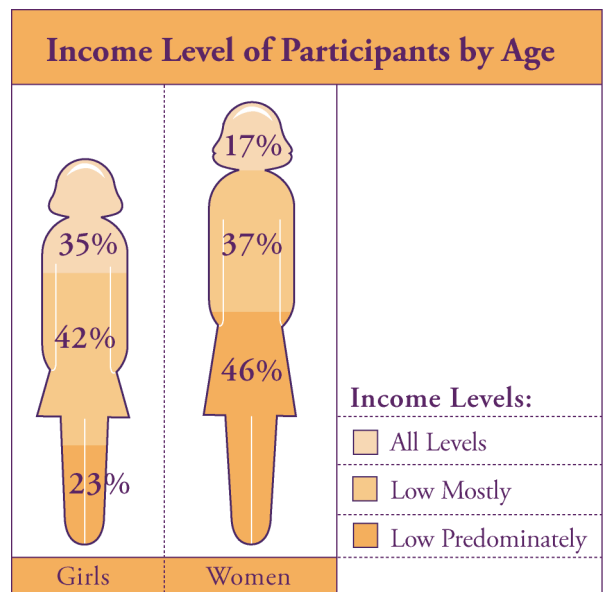


Income Differences Among Grants Serving Girls and Grants Serving Women

One difference in grants to women and girls is the economic group which they reach. Grants reaching girls of all income levels is 35% of all girl grants; while grants reaching women of all income levels are 17%. Overall, grants to women are more highly concentrated among low income women than grants to girls. One possible explanation is that girls are not as segregated by class as women and agencies may have more access to locations where girls of all income groups are together, e.g., schools, girls' groups, and clubs, like Girl Scouts.

Income level of participants by age

	Girls Grants	Women Grants
Low income predominantly	63	297
Low income mostly	118	241
All income levels	98	112

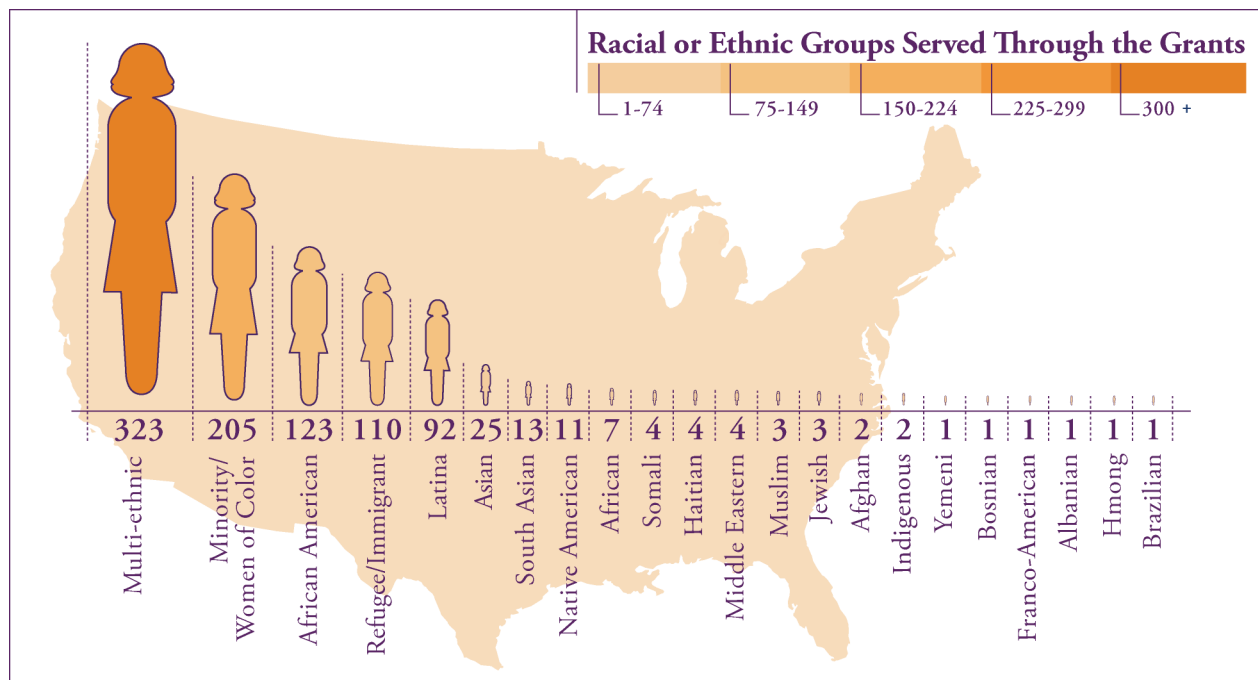


Diversity

Women's funds "walk their talk." In addition to reaching women across all economic classes, funds have a commitment to the inclusiveness of all women by race, religion and ethnicity. Grant making patterns indicate broad inclusion, proving that diversity is a living value. A total of 614 of the grants explicitly served women and girls who are part of racial, religious and ethnic minorities or recent immigrants. Many of these grants support networks and associations comprised of women from a particular racial or ethnic group. For example, the Boston Women's

Fund provided a grant to Southeast Asian Bilingual Advocates for the purpose of improving the health and well-being of Southeast Asian women through education, cultural brokering, advocacy and building individual capacity for self-advocacy.

Another 323 grants were awarded to programs that serve women of many racial and ethnic groups. For example, the New York Women's Foundation funded Domestic Workers United for a program supporting multi-ethnic leadership among low-wage workers, and advocating fair labor standards in the domestic worker industry.



Conditions of Women's Lives

While income, age, race and ethnicity provide information about the life of a woman or a girl, many other conditions affect the women and girls receiving assistance through women's funds. The list below categorizes some of the additional conditions characterizing women's lives:

Condition	Grants
Victims of Domestic Violence	97
Homeless	52
Incarcerated	51
LGBTQ	28
Disabled	25
Teen parents	21
Prostituted	19
Labor	18
HIV+	18
Rural	16
Substance abuse	12
Pregnant	11
Unemployed	10
Welfare system	9
Policy makers	4
Ill	4
Older	3



This list is not exhaustive, but provides a snapshot of the complex issues of women's lives that funds tackle through their grantmaking. Additionally, many grants are made to change the lives of women who are affected by several conditions simultaneously. For example, the Ms. Foundation for Women funded the Utah Progressive Network to coordinate a task force to improve healthcare access for pregnant women with substance abuse issues. The Michigan Women's Foundation gave a grant to Lesbian A-Sisters to conduct a one-day training seminar for 10 lesbian and bisexual women living with disabilities.



three

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Influence & Potential

Influence & Potential of Women's Funds

Women's funds are nearing the tipping point of name recognition, leadership and public trust in their work which is key to future growth and influences in policy, philanthropy and grassroots spheres. The following sections provide additional information about insights gained from the mapping data.



Funding Partners

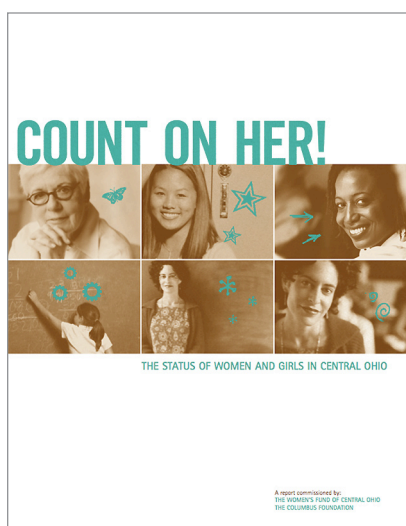
The mapping database provides valuable information about many facets of the funds' social change work. One drawback, however, is the lack of consistent and comprehensive information about other funders of the women's funds grantees. While a comprehensive list is not available, below is a list of common funders of women's fund grantees. Partner funders represent a broad cross-section of the philanthropic community. These include:

- Other Women's Funds from the region, or those with national focus (Women's Sports Foundation, Ms. Foundation for Women, Sister Fund, Third Wave Foundation)
- United Ways
- Community Foundations
- Progressive Private Foundations (P.G. Nathan Cumming, MacArthur, W.K. Kellogg, Ford, Annie E. Casey, California Wellness and many



others)

- Regional Corporations (Blue Cross and Blue Shield, Fifth Third Bank)
- State Arts Councils
- Federal Departments (Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Health and Human Services (HHS))
- Donor advised funds and small family foundations with links to other funds



Research

Almost all funds have commissioned and used analyses of the condition of women or another type of research as a benchmark, a call to action, or a platform for action. Funds use their research for several purposes:

- to benchmark community progress and social change
- to inform public policy
- to determine funding priorities for the fund
- to determine programming for the fund
- to inspire community demand for cogent research about the status of women and girls
- to evaluate the impact of the fund over time

For example, *COUNT ON HER! The Status of Women and Girls in Central Ohio*, is a report commissioned by The Women's Fund of Central Ohio. This report presents the opportunity for investing in Central Ohio's women and girls and thereby benefiting the entire community. Highlighting the assets that are specific to women and girls, the report counts the status of over 800,000 women and girls in Ohio. It is the first gender-specific study conducted for the seven-county region of Central Ohio. The release of the report garnered substantial media attention and has, in fact, been a catalyst for a new research institute for women and girls in Ohio. The Women's Fund of Central Ohio commissioned the report for the reasons noted above. Similar studies have been done by fund in more than 30 states and numerous cities (e.g. Dallas). Many of the studies have been done in partnerships with the institution for Women's Policy Research, Washington, D.C.

Collaborations & Coalitions

Funding Networks and Leading Collaborations

Women's funds utilize networking and collaborative models in both grantmaking and community leadership work. Women's Funds are collaborating to gain scale and to transform mainstream community services.

Funding Coalitions and Collaboration Through Grantmaking

All the women's funds interviewed placed a high value on grantees utilizing collaboration in their work. Techniques to leverage and catalyze collaboration include:

- Several funds provide grants directly to coalitions and networks. One hundred (100) of the grants in the mapping database are conferred to networks or coalitions. The grantee networks are concentrated in several topic areas including reproductive rights, economic justice/development, and political rights/civic participation. The Ms. Foundation for Women has a special pool of funds titled, "Reproductive Rights Coalition and Organizing Fund" supporting coalitions as the primary tool in holding the line in reproductive rights.

Most common topics among funded networks

Reproductive rights	14
Economic justice/development	14
Political rights/civic participation	13
Gender-based violence	10
Immigrant/refugee rights	7
Health	5
Criminal justice/incarceration	4

- Most funds typically fund a single organization rather than a collective. In these cases, funds have created grantmaking criteria that recognize the value of collaboration and all funds interviewed reported that they ask or know how their grantees are involved in collaborations or coalitions. As the Maine Women's Fund reported, "We mostly fund individual organizations although we have a strong preference for organizations that do work in collaboratives or coalitions. We don't have all that many coalitions except for domestic violence [or] sexual assault. We proactively funded an initiative to reinstate Medicaid funding for abortion." Other funds require collaboration in the work of their grantees.
- Some funds work to catalyze collaboration among fund grantees. One fund said, "We ask grantees who they collaborate with. We have a grant partner luncheon so we can all meet each other; it's a catalyst for collaboration."
- Many funds anticipate funding more collaboratives and networks going forward. One fund reported, "For regular cycles in the past, we have funded mostly individual organizations (90% or more). For [the new] initiative, most of the grantmaking will go to coalitions. This will be highly intentional and encouraged. Building coalitions, networks and webs is the way we have to go to build the scale of support needed to make social change."

Collaborative Funding

- Women's funds collaborate with other funders and with action coalitions focused on their own issue-priorities (e.g., environment, community development, economic development, etc.).
- Granting funding through coalitions and collaboratives is one of the most popular strategic approaches practiced by women's funds.

Community Leadership Through Collaboration

During the interviews, the Funds described their role in collaborations as:

- Funneling information from one audience to another (e.g., marginalized to mainstream). For example, funds share information about a state-wide domestic violence policy campaign initiated by a network within their donor base.
- Brokering relationships between grassroots activists, mainstream community leaders and regional funders to create social change.
- Helping grassroots organizations to legitimize their work with other audiences.
- Leading coalitions to create social change.
- Convening organizations and groups to determine the best way to solve community problems or create social change.

Example:

The Chicago Foundation for Women reported that they are “very active” in more than seven coalitions. Coalitions range from the Chicago Coalition for Microbicides, to the Chicago Rape Crisis Hotline Advisory Council, to the Paid Family Leave Coalition. For the most part, the fund’s collaborative work is aimed at advocacy. Primarily, the fund plays the role of a funnel – trying to get issues and education in front of their audience. For example, they have an advocacy alert e-newsletter that shares information from various coalitions in which they are involved. They also host educational presentations by coalitions to Fund donors and constituents. In the past, the Chicago Foundation for Women has funded the work of coalitions in which they participate. They noted that serving as part of a coalition is part of being a good steward and partner.

Leadership of the Funds

How do you create change in a community? Go to the Women’s Foundation! Several funds reported that their influence continues to grow as they refine strategies, increase their scale, create new partnerships and harness the power of their connections.

When asked, “how would you describe your greatest impact as a funder?” the funds considered their grant-making and programs, but almost all of the funds chose to emphasize the role that they play as philanthropic leaders bridging the margins and the mainstream as social change is created.

The following notes represent the funds’ descriptions of their greatest impact as a funder:

Improving Communities by Helping Women

- We have demystified what a “women’s issue” is. We reframe it as a community issue. -- Women’s Foundation of Maine
- Our grant making has had the most impact. Also our role in collaborations and convenings has had a big impact. Convenings allow us to be responsive to issues in the community and to be a liaison within the community. -- Women’s Foundation for a Greater Memphis

Catalyzing Social Change

- We get issues on the table and help build the movement. Our systems change work has been a catalyst for the movement. – Women’s Fund of Rhode Island

- It's our mere presence that has had the greatest impact. We started using language about social change. This has increased programming in our area. – The Women's Fund of Central Ohio

Inspiring Advocacy and Systems Change

- Our decision to do policy education and policy work [has had the greatest impact]. The Women's Policy Institute has now trained 100 grassroots leaders across the state to engage in moving toward systemic change. Changing mindsets [is our impact]. It usually takes about a year to convince an organization to get active on policy. – The Women's Foundation of California
- We are part of the YWCA Leadership Registry Project whose goal is to populate non-profit boards in the metro area with more women and people of color. Matches are arranged between individuals and organizations. Originally, we were looking to shift individual behavior but by the second year we started looking at critical mass and engagement. Now in the third year we are looking at what difference it has made to the sector to have increased numbers of women and people of color sitting on their boards. – Women's Foundation of Minnesota

Building Better Social Change Organizations

- We put a lot of service groups on the map and provided an infrastructure of women's organizations in the city. The Foundation's resources were used as an endorser of a legitimate organization. – Chicago Foundation for Women
- Helping to build the capacity of our grantees to understand and evaluate social change and the impact they are seeing [is our greatest

impact]. To help [grantees] understand they need to be accountable to their constituencies. – Women's Foundation of Minnesota

- We are viewed as a leader in after-school programs for girls and also viewed as a source of leadership development for women in our community. – Chrysalis Foundation

Pioneering Issues and Leveraging Philanthropy

- We would be described as pioneers in the way we leverage resources. We partnered with 40 foundations and leveraged millions of dollars. We are also known for working collaboratively, gender analysis and addressing the question, "why women"? – Ms. Foundation for Women
- We're often the first funder. They see us as a continual presence in the community, as a funder and as a participant. – The Women's Foundation of California
- We are able to be early investors and willing to take risks when other folks may not. [We] open doors to other organizations and provide support to leaders that can't find support elsewhere. People will say that we are risk takers with open doors. – Chicago Foundation for Women

Building Influence

- Other leaders have talked about how quickly we've established ourselves as a community influencer. – The Women's Fund of Central Ohio
- We are perceived as the most successful women's organization in the state and we have really raised the bar and awareness around women's philanthropy. We are thought of as a "go-to" place. We can connect anybody! – Maine Women's Fund

Examples of the Scale and Scope of Women's Fund Leadership

Below are two examples of how women's funds are leading the way on the most important issues facing communities today: economic development, health, and housing.

Highlight: The Ms. Foundation for Women

The Ms. Foundation for Women pioneered the collaborative funding of women's economic empowerment through the Collaborative Fund for Women's Economic Development. According to the Ms. Foundation's report, The Collaborative Fund, established in 1991, provides support to organizations across the country that help low-income women start and expand microenterprises and larger social purpose businesses. The Ms. Foundation for Women administers the Collaborative Fund, participates in the fund as a donor, and works in an ongoing technical assistance relationship with grantee organizations. The Collaborative Fund is a working partnership among national foundations, corporate philanthropies, family and community foundations, and individual donors. The most recent grants were made possible by the Linked Foundation, The Wells Fargo Foundation, The Citigroup Foundation, The E. M. Kauffman Foundation and the Ms. Foundation for Women.

The goal of the Collaborative Fund for Women's Economic Development is to support and refine enterprise development practice and change the broader policy and economic environment in which programs operate. The Fund provides grantee organizations with technical assistance, training, and networking in addition to funding. Accomplishments of CFWED include:

- Mobilizing \$12 million over the last decade to help low-income women find the means to support themselves and their families,
- Bringing together 40 individual, corporate and foundation donors over four grantmaking rounds in one of the first true national funding collaborations,
- Contributing knowledge to the field of enterprise development through the publication of research and training manuals.

Highlight: Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis

The Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis is part of an initiative called Hope VI, a collaborative focusing on housing revitalization. The project provides an opportunity to make a dramatic difference in the lives of 145 low-income families by linking housing opportunities with job training and job placement, access to health resources, child care, youth programming, financial management and asset accumulation. Hope VI is a project funded in part by HUD and involves relocating 600 people who have been living in low income housing, providing them

with support services, new housing and finally redesigning this section of Memphis as a multi-income neighborhood with robust economic development. Ninety-eight percent (98%) of the families in these housing projects are headed by women. The Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis will raise and manage \$7.3 million of funds to Hope VI families. Only one year into the four-year project, the Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis has already secured several million dollars towards their goal.

Outcomes of Grants

In addition to leading community wide social change efforts, the grants of women's funds create a substantial impact. Examples of outcomes of women's fund's grants include:

- In 2004, The Chicago Foundation for Women granted \$20,000 to the Roger Baldwin Foundation of the ACLU for the purpose of challenging a federal ban on abortion that contains no health exception for pregnant women. As a result of this work, in January 2006 the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit affirmed a district court ruling in the ACLU's favor. Companion cases to this matter now are on appeal to the United States Supreme Court.
- The Washington Area Women's Foundation funded the Northern Virginia Family Service for Training Futures Program. As a result of this work, 400 people have graduated since 1996 with 90% of graduates securing full-time employment.
- In 2005, The Chicago Foundation for Women granted \$10,000 to Project Exploration's "Sisters 4 Science" program. Due to this work, 92% of the participating students graduated from high school which is 18% over the average graduation rate of other students attending the same schools. These students are 3.4% more likely to enroll in college.
- The Women's Fund of Central Ohio funded the Economic and Community Development Institute's "Get REAL: Raising Economic, Independence, Assets and Leadership" for the purpose of assisting low-income women in



becoming economically independent by helping them establish successful micro enterprises. There were 1,104 clients served and the total amount of IDA funds matched was \$5,417,600.

- In 2004, 2005, and 2006, The New York Women's Foundation granted \$25,000, \$25,000, and \$40,000, respectively, to ACCION New York. As a result, in 2004, their business loans helped to retain or create nearly 2,000 jobs in communities where local jobs were scarce. A survey of 400 ACCION New York clients revealed that after completing only their first loan, the clients experienced a 29% increase in monthly business profits, a 24% rise in monthly owner's draw, and a 21% increase in monthly household income.



How Connected are Women's Funds?

Recently several women's funds have undergone an assessment to understand the strength and range of their connections. This exercise in "Six Degrees of Separation" resulted in strong evidence that leaders of women's funds are well-connected and hold a place of influence within their communities. Women's fund leaders were asked to identify connections that they had to networks of people and organizations that may have an interest in social change, and the fund's future activities (including a special initiative from WFN to be launched next year.)

The initial findings demonstrate that the funds' leaders, and therefore the funds, are connected to and have access to partners in every sector -- from other non-profits, to business, faith institutions, and government.

For example, a staff member from an urban fund in the Midwest indicated that she has influence with at least seven referral organizations that could support social change. These referrals included the Lieutenant Governor's office, local Time Warner representatives, other women's foundations, the local newspaper, the Interfaith Alliance, the YWCA and the vice president of a grocery store chain.

An East Coast women's fund leader named 13 organizations with which she has strong connections that could turn into social action. These included the Rockefeller Foundation, National Association of Women Business Owners, Lifetime TV, National Council of Women's Organizations, Nation Council of Negro Women, AOL, LaRaza, Consumer Union, local school leaders, and several other local business leaders.

When asked to list the campaigns in social changes in which their fund has been active and influential, eleven of the E.D.'s named:

- Housing revitalization
- Female child prostitution
- Homelessness
- Licensing childcare
- Living wage campaigns
- Advocacy with local water boards to prevent fees for portable water
- Anti-slavery
- Human trafficking
- Financial literacy
- Anti-violence
- AIDS action
- Immigrant health education



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Conclusions

Conclusion

By building on the assets of women in both the mainstream and the margins of society, women's funds are increasing the critical resources of money, empowerment, and civic engagement on behalf of some of the most pressing social and economic issues both locally and nationally.

Additionally, women's funds focus on a theory of change that calls for serving, enabling and engaging women and girls at the margins in order to strengthen and attain full rights and responsibilities for all.

Women's funds have not yet grown to the full scale needed by their communities and constituencies, but they are all growing and intensifying—alone and together—their strategic knowledge about best practices and achieving impact. Women's funds' unique combinations of resources increasingly make them a “go-to” institution for policy makers, decision makers and women themselves.



The nature of the issue-priorities in women's lives, and, therefore, with women's funds and their grantees, position them in the midst of community and national priorities, adding further leverage to their preferred practice of collaboration.

Some of the implications for action resulting from the picture that this mapping study provides includes:

- Women's funds seem ready to collaborate more intentionally on common strategies/topics to make change ripple from coast to coast (e.g. economic issues, health, violence, etc.) and need to plan for such focused impact.
- Other funders -- from any/all sub-sectors of philanthropy -- shall consider making a partnership with women's funds as a way of getting resources with the hands of leaders of those women and girls who need social change.
- If other funders/donors want to achieve major systemic change in their communities they should consider the position and potential women's funds as a partner.
- If funders and other decision makers want to understand effective grantmaking and partnerships with low income and diverse women... find a women's fund.

The women's funds, held together with shared vision through the Women's Funding Network, function with the coherence of a movement, not just a network. Cultivating this coherence through the sharing of knowledge and adoption of best practices, the work of women's funds grows increasingly significant in today's world.

